WHIRRAKEE

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Secretary/Public Officer	Stuart Fraser	5443 1326
Minute Secretary	*position vacant*	
Treasurer	Ben Goonan	
Membership Officer	Anne Bridley	5442 6188
Excursion organiser	*position vacant*	
Syllabus organiser	Ben Goonan	
Librarian	*to be confirmed*	
Garden Convenor/Secretary	*position vacant*	
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Website coordinator/Webmaster	Ben Goonan	

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The meeting starts with a 10 minute thing-of-the night natural history segment. The invited speaker starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Anne Bridley (minute secretary), Glenise Moors, Joy Clusker, Kerrie Norris, John Lindner. Matt Comer

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. Several interclub field naturalist campouts are held every year.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one sub-group (the Fauna Study Group) and is actively involved in local conservation issues. An **indigenous garden** has been established around the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building. Working bees are advertised on the *Whirrakee* diary page.

Fauna Study Group: Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)
Regular fauna excursions take place most Fridays. See page 11 for details.

Bird Observing: Club members conduct regular bird surveys. Please contact Anne Bridley 5442 6188 or Glenise Moors 5439 6254 for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5442 6188.
To propose bird observing excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see page 2

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Vol. 33, No. 8, October 2012
Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

CONTENT

Item	Contributor	Page
Inspiring Huntly	Nicole Howie	3
Further observation from One-Tree Hill	Dale Little	3
September speaker summary, Chris Jones	Sabine Wilkens	3
Colour Photo section	various wonderful photographers	4-7
November excursion	John Lindner	8
July Geology Excursion report	Rod Orr	8

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
Another Annual General Meeting has been and gone, and it is nice to see some small changes, starting at the edges. Personally, I was thrilled to see a co-editor emerge, who will hopefully take this Whirrakee *into the 21st century. To this end, I hope that you all responded one way or another to the question whether or not you would like to receive the* Whirrakee *electronically, or prefer a hard copy. If you have not responded, can you please do so soon. Simply e-mail the address given on the top of the inside front cover. There are also still a couple of unfilled positions, so you have not lost your chance to contribute. Please see page 11 for the jobs still to be filled. As I am writing this, the bush behind the university looks absolutely beautiful – so good, that you want to tell the whole world.*

Front page photographer: Joy Clusker
This photo, taken during the August Family Nature Club excursion to the Rifle Range Road, will stir different emotions in different people. Some people hate dodder (*Cassytha melantha*) with a passion, some admire it, and some have never heard of it before. Dodder is a parasitic plant, which sprawls all over other plants and thus gets enough light to photosynthesise with its wiry stems (it has no leaves to speak of). The specimen in the photo is about to open its small white flowers. Dodder is found naturally around Bendigo, but in an altered or disturbed ecosystem, it can cause problems by smothering many native plants with its entangled network of stems. It is a master in the art of knotting and coiling as this photo shows very well.

Short Notices

November Excursion

An interesting club excursion, led by John Lindner, is planned for November. Please check out the destination and detail on page 8.

Inspiring Huntly

by Nicole Howie

Nicole sent this good news story in May. It is very late, but still a good story. Some accompanying pictures are on page 6 (ed)

As you might be aware, I have been liaising with members of the Field Nats (with both my Northern Bendigo Landcare AND Huntly PS Sustainability teacher hats on) to have Landcare/School 'adopt' the old Huntly Council Pound and use the site as a environmental education project. We have been lucky to secure funding from Fosterville Mine to put toward the project and plan to complete enhancement of the remnant vegetation, install nest boxes, erect signage and purchase equipment that will enable school children to visit often during their regular Sustainability lessons to conduct activities there (it's perfectly situated and just a 5min walk from the school).

The Field Nats are the current Committee of Management for the Pound and have supported our efforts wholeheartedly to date.

Yesterday, we conducted a National School's Tree Day planting activity at the Pound with Grade 3,4,5,6 students walking to the site to plant a native plant and learn about the importance of remnant vegetation such as this - particularly in our rapidly developing town of new housing estates. John Linder attended the day and both John and Stuart Fraser conducted environmental activities at the site in Term 2 for Grade 5/6 students. (Some photos that show these activities are shown on page 6). We plan to keep the lines of communication open with the Field Nats and involve the group in this project as much as we can. We thank them for their support and guidance.

Further observations from One Tree Hill

by Dale Little

On our recent walk at One Tree Hill (Sunday 23 September), Peter and I came across this orchid (pictured on page 5) about half way up the walking track. We identified it as a wax lip orchid (*Glossodia major*). The stem was covered in fine hairs and there was a single hairy basal leaf. In the area we walked through, wax lip orchids had replaced the abundant leopard orchids seen several weeks earlier. There were many specimens, all flourishing in the various soils on the hill. Checking later, in the 'Orchids of Bendigo', we read that in 1968, 43 pure white specimens were seen. Others in the Field Nats may have been more fortunate than us in finding white wax lips, but we were thrilled as this was our first.

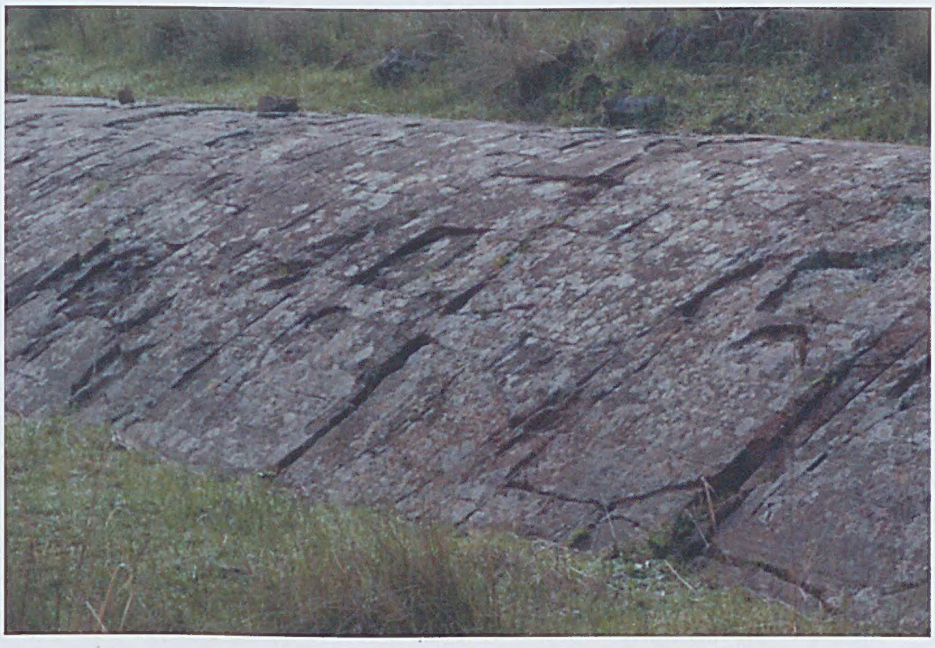
September General meeting – Chris Jones: Monitoring and Management of riparian vegetation in the Victorian Riverina

by Sabine Wilkens

How complex is vegetation monitoring? The answer is 'very complex'! As part of his PhD studies, Chris Jones assessed vegetation on sections of the Broken, Boosey and Nine Mile Creek. Any sections of creek bank with remnant vegetation are valuable habitat and genuine refuges in an agricultural landscape, so good management of these is very important. Two prominent threats to riparian vegetation in these landscapes are livestock grazing and cropping adjacent to that native vegetation. Chris devised benchmark standards and surveys for monitoring the vegetation in a comparable way, which allows for continuous checking of any changes over time, and which can be followed up by appropriate management. Fencing, weed removal, changes of grazing licenses and planting, are all management options that need to be considered carefully, so that any input of funds and effort have the best chances of success. It sounds straight forward, but most certainly is not. Meaningful data collection in such complex systems is a major challenge.

Geology is good any time of the year. These photos are from a trial excursion, conducted by Eric Wilkinson in July, in preparation for the SEANA camp. See write-up on page 8. Photos by Orr

Dunn's Rock ➔
The striae run along the length of the rock in this image - they are finer and fainter than the prominent cracks that run across it. There is a beautiful photo by Tom Patullo in the *Bendigo Naturalist*, showing the striae on the excavated and cleaned part of this rock, which was buried again to preserve these features.



↑ Weathered Granodiorite & lump of Magnesite at Pink Cliffs near Heathcote

This view of Pink Cliffs shows Greenstone ➔ (~600 million years old) with Magnesite veins, Ordovician bedrock (~400 million years old) - the yellow rock in the lower right-hand edge of the photo, and the pale pink weathered Granodiorite (bottom of the photo).

↑ Mt Ida quartzite containing Crinoid fossil (in longitudinal section) ~ 2 cm long.

← Quartzite with Crinoids shown end-on or in X-section (~ 5 mm diameter).

↑ A white wax lip orchid flowering in One Tree Hill (photographed by Dale Little, see page 3)

Hurray for Huntly – May Treeplanting with Huntly Primary School (see text on page 3)
Photos by Nicole Howie

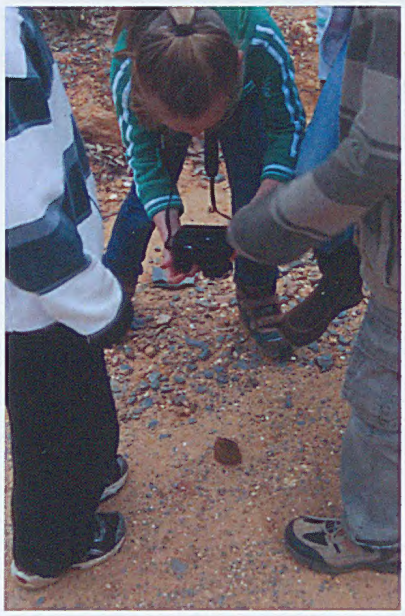
Who says school is not fun?

September Family Nature Club: 'Wild kids and wild flowers'. Photos by Joy Clusker

Lots of kids
Lost of mining tunnels or caves
Lots of flowers
Lots of fun

Goldfields Grevillea, *Grevillea dryophylla* ↑

↑
A very deep pink form of Bendigo Wax plant



← Budding photographers snapping a 'horse dropping fungus'

BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB NOVEMBER 2012 EXCURSION

DATE: Saturday 17 November 2012 (weekend after the general meeting)

LEADER/ORGANISER: John Lindner

LOCATION: Kamarooka Forest section of the Greater Bendigo National Park

SUBJECTS: Eucalyptus distilling and its history. Plants . Birds (especially evidence of the Mallee Fowl, now extinct in this area)

ATTRACTIONS
Typical small mallee fowl mound. The big mallee fowl mound (see August *Whirrakee).* Ruedin's eucalyptus distillery with its dwelling and various old machinery. Mallee eucalypt species (Blue, Bull, Green, Kamarooka). Wildflowers and birds

MODE OF TRAVEL
Driving with some moderately long and short walks

GUEST SPEAKER AND GUIDE
Noel Ruedin, son of Lorna and Leon Ruedin who once operated the factory we will see. History of the distillery and reminiscences about the Whipstick

MAP: A map of the area will be available

MEETING at BFNC clubrooms, 8.30 am

CAR TRAVEL DETAILS
Out to Huntly via Midland Highway. Up the Tennyson Road to the track into Ruedin's eucalyptus distillery . Move over to Clays Road (Kamarooka East Road) to look at various flora, including Kamarooka Mallee. Total return distance is about 80 km.

COST
We will car pool as much as possible. It is suggested that passengers contribute $5 towards the cost of driving the car they are in.

WALK DETAILS
1. 2 km along narrow bush track to Ruedin's eucalyptus distillery (= 4 k return)
Note: You must carry your own food and water, preferably in a backpack, to the distillery where we will have morning tea and lunch. We may be able to have one car to take people in who are unable to walk this distance.
2. 0.5 km along track to the big mallee fowl mound (= 1.0 km return)
3. 0.5 km around the bush at Clays Road. Total walking distance is therefore is about 5.5 – 6.0 km.

WHAT TO WEAR AND BRING
Cool, cover-up clothing
Hat
Sturdy walking shoes or boots
Water
Morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea
Binoculars
Camera

Report of the July Geology Excursion, conducted by Eric Wilkinson

Author: Rod Orr

This excursion was one of the trial ones, in preparation for the SEANA camp in August, but the write-up has not been included in the magazine so far. As there is a lot of interest in geology in the club, and as geology does not markedly change with the seasons, I thought it was worthwhile publishing, even many weeks after the event! (ed.)

We travelled first to the Mc Ivor Hill where the Whitelaw Fault is visible on the roadside adjacent to the Mc Ivor Highway. Here, Eric introduced us to one of the significant fault-lines which define the Bendigo Gold-field and we all were transported millions of years into the past desperately trying to come to grips with the dimensions and time-scales associated with this fault.

The traffic made it quite a noisy place to be - nobody was interested enough to slow down

to see what we were doing - perhaps very few Bendigo residents know anything much about the details of our local geology but we were certainly looking forward to a day of concentrated focus on significant geological events.

We next travelled out to the Axedale-Goornong Road, where we had a clear view of the Sugarloaf Range & the Fosterville Mine (now Crocodile Gold, I believe, after yet another change of ownership), which follows the line of the Fosterville Fault.

We drove from Axedale to Lake Eppalock, noticing the basalt-capped rises along the way and the columnar basalt at Lake Eppalock which had been used in the construction of the dam wall, then, across the wall to the foreshore area at Moorabbee where we walked along the beach with its very interesting glacial erratics. We continued walking along the shoreline to the area where we used to be able to view Kellam's Rock, a large, deeply grooved glacial pavement, but, because of our unusually wet Autumn and Winter, the water levels were much too high to see the scratches & grooves left by the movement of glaciers over the Ordovician bedrock.

We could see these glacial striae, however, on Robbin's Rock which is above the high water level of the lake in a small gully, when we were walking up the slope to Dunn's Rock (see page 4). This is a large pavement, which has easily seen parallel grooves & scratches even though they have been blurred by erosion - the buried sections of this pavement were excavated extensively by Bendigo Field Naturalists in 1973 (one of whom was Eric) to demonstrate that this really was a glacial pavement, scratched by rocks held beneath the glacier that had covered all of this part of Victoria, and not simply part of an anticline formation. This excavation and the justification for it is described by Frank Robbins in his article in the *Bendigo Naturalist* (Vol 6, No 2, August 1973).

Next we drove around to Moorabbee Bluff, stopping for lunch on the way near a boat-ramp. Because of the high water-level (fancy complaining about having too much water so soon after our prolonged drought!), we couldn't see the interglacial pavements (one of these is Wilkinson's Rock) on the bluff, but, we could see enough to puzzle us all - what we all (except Eric, of course!) had misinterpreted as Ordovician bedrock was much younger, by hundreds of millions of years, and was Permian sandstone formed by the consolidation of sands & gravel flowing out from the bottom of the glacier. The clue, which I think we all eventually came to recognise, was in the bedding planes of the sandstone, ~ horizontal in the Permian sandstone compared with the more familiar tilted strata of the eroded anticlines & synclines of the folded Ordovician sandstone. Easy! At least, after it had been explained patiently several times over by Eric! We really were a trial group of geological novices asking lots of questions - excellent preparation for Eric for the SEANA excursion to follow later in August! Also, we could see Mt Ida clearly from Moorabbee Bluff – but could we see the Bluff from Mt Ida?

We stopped at a roadside cutting to see more erratics and a good section of glacial tillite - well away from the busy traffic that we could hear across the water all the way from the Mc Ivor Highway.

Then we travelled East along the Mc Ivor Hwy to Heathcote and the Pink Cliffs where we really travelled back in time at the Greenstone deposit (~600 million years old) - a prominent uplifted section of Ordovician bedrock ~400 million years old and the decomposing & decomposed pink coloured Granodiorite (only ~250 million years old) were all there within a very small area in this Geological Heritage Reserve. We also saw outcrops and veins of Magnesite (Magnesium carbonate), its bright whiteness contrasting with the pink Granodiorite and the grey-green of the Greenstone (see photos of these on page 4))

Jan & I hadn't visited the Pink Cliffs for many years, but back then, I had noticed a small

number of hybrid acacias near the walking path through the site - we searched for them on Sunday, of course, and found them still surviving after what must be 15 - 20 years since our previous visit. They appear to be intermediate between Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*) and Varnish Wattle (*Acacia verniciflua*), having wavy, dark green phyllodes a bit like Hedge Wattle, but few or no spines at all. Their presumed parents are growing closely together in the same small area.

We travelled to our last geological site at the top of Mt Ida, which affords wonderful views of the surrounding flat lands and Lake Eppalock (too hard to see the Bluff from there though!). We were distracted by the search for Crinoids (most pronounce this as 'cry-noids', but Doctor Who fans probably prefer 'crinn-oids') in the hard quartzite rock fragments strewn alongside the very steep track to the summit. Although we found more Crinoids as we climbed higher, mostly in X-section or end-on, Anne picked up a piece of rock much lower down which had a splendid specimen in longitudinal section, which gave us all a much clearer understanding of a Crinoid fossil as a 3-D object (see page 5).

We made our way back down Mt Ida but had to weaken, briefly, and walk over to some of the flowering plants alongside the road - they should be spectacular during Eric's SEANA excursion - very tempting distractions which might need to be allowed for in the geology schedule.

This was a wonderful excursion - everyone was very pleased that they had come along - we all thanked Eric for his clear & patient explanations of geological timescales and processes, which helped us to a better understanding of some of the significant features of our local geology.

Below are the birds seen at Junortoun, Axedale, Lake Eppalock, Pink Cliffs and Mt Ida (bird list complied by Anne Bridley from contributions by the whole group):

Australian Wood Duck
Darter
Little Black Cormorant
Masked Lapwing
Crested Pigeon
Galah
Long-billed Corella
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Musk Lorikeet
Purple-crowned Lorikeet
Crimson Rosella
Eastern Rosella
Red-rumped Parrot
Laughing Kookaburra
White-throated Treecreeper
Superb Fairy-wren
Striated Pardalote
Weebill
Buff-rumped Thornbill
Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Yellow Thornbill
Striated Thornbill
Red Wattlebird
Blue-faced Honeyeater
Noisy Miner
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater
White-plumed Honeyeater
Brown-headed Honeyeater
White-naped Honeyeater
Scarlet Robin
Eastern Yellow Robin
Crested Shrike-tit
Golden Whistler
Rufous Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Magpie-lark
Grey Fantail
Willie Wagtail
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike
Grey Butcherbird
Australian Magpie
Australian Raven
Little Raven
White-winged Chough
Richard's Pipit
Welcome Swallow
Silvereye
Common Starling
Common Myna

Diary

All Club meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High St Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

Wednesday October 10 7.30pm
Dr Gregory Holland, Research Fellow, Faculty of Science and Technology, School of Life and Environ-mental Sciences, Deakin University: 'Fire in box-ironbark forests: an experimental investigation of ecological outcomes'

Wednesday November 14 7.30pm
Professor Max Finlayson, Director, Centre of Research Excellence:Institute for Land, Water and Society, Charles Sturt University: 'The biodiversity crisis – globally and Australia'

Positions Vacant

The BFNC is urgently looking for an enthusiastic member who can take on, or help with responsibilities of the club garden. The garden is well-established and in great shape, but especially at the moment, needs a bit of maintenance work (as all gardens in Bendigo right now) to get on top of the spring weeds. This is an ongoing position for one person, but can also be taken on by a small group.

The BFNC is also looking for a member who will take the minutes at our general meetings. This is a small but crucial job for somebody who attends regular meetings, or would like a good reason to do so.

Please phone Jan Orr with any expressions of interest for both positions.

Club Excursions

An excursion is planned for November 17 to the Kamarooka Forest section of the Greater Bendigo National Park. See page 8 for details

Regular Fauna Excursions

Every Friday morning starting at around 9 to 9:30 the Fauna Group inspects nest boxes in the Spring Gully area. The excursions are led by Maurie Lewis, 16 Vains St. Golden Square. Phone 0407 427 179. Phone Maurie to confirm exact departure times and location. If you don't phone and go directly to Maurie's house and find nobody at the house between 9 and 9:30, then the excursion is not on.

Family Nature Club

The next activity will involve macro-invertebrates (National Water week is during October). Please register if you are turning up with family, or let Jan and Rod know if you intend to offer assistance.
Check out their 2011 and 2012 activities at http://bendigofamilynatureclub.blogspot.com/

Registration:
Bendigonatureclub@gmail.com or 5443-1326

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.

W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

Art Exhibition 'Spring Time'

September 1 – October 15
Gail Tavener Art Studio76 Emmett St, Golden Square VIC 3551.
A delightful exhibition of original paintings including new works of local birds. Gail Tavener is an award winning Australian artist, who paints traditional realist and contemporary works in oil, watercolour, pastel, acrylic and ink

Friday, 28 October 2011 11 am – 5 pm.
Wedderburn Uniting Church Annual Community Fleece & Flower Show.
Admission Adults - $3.00, Children - Free.
Proceeds from the Fleece & Flower Show go to the UCA funds. Donations of goods, cash and fleeces gratefully accepted.
Where: Wedderburn Mechanics Institute Hall High St, Wedderburn